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November 29, 1979

CENTRAL FLORIDA JOINS VENTURE, ACTS IN LABOR DISPUTE

ORLANDO, Fla. -- The Diocese of Central Florida has joined the Episcopal Church's Venture In Mission and set the goal for its capital funds campaign at \$3,029,000.

The 1979 convention of the diocese, meeting at its Cathedral Church of St. Luke here on November 10, committed itself to Central Florida Venture In Mission, its goal for capital needs, and those concerns to which campaign funds will be directed.

Of the \$3,029,000, a grant of \$329,000 is dedicated to the Diocese of Central Florida's companion Diocese of Honduras. \$50,000 would go to the Diocese of Jerusalem so that it may minister more effectively to human need and suffering among the people of the Holy Land. The rest is slated for work within the diocese.

The diocese committed not only its dollars, but its human resources to mission work with an offer to mediate a bitter labor dispute.

In his address to the convention, the Rt. Rev. William H. Folwell offered himself and his office as neutral territory in which Florida's agri-industry unionization disputes might be negotiated.

Bishop Folwell said: "Owners and growers are human beings, many are Christians, and many of those are Episcopalians. Farm workers are human beings, many are Christians, very few are Episcopalians. But the Church's task is to serve all people in the work and ministry of reconciliation.

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"The efforts to establish better working conditions may -- or may not -- be served best by labor organization. But the problem, the struggle will not evaporate. If we ignore it, we will not serve our moral commitment as Christians."

Bishop Folwell believes that the Church in the role of reconciler can give valuable assistance to all people involved in agriculture's problems. He offers himself, his office and diocesan personnel to assist in all attempts at reconciliation and solution. "Let us," he said, "provide the neutral ground in which everyone can talk with one another."

"This is an open invitation. Representatives of owner/growers/management are urged to make use of this offer. Those who espouse unionization must be present. All who share this concern are urged to respond."

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